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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000826

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG

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TAGS: PREL SU QA EG

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MFA REACTS TO VISIT OF S/E GRATION

REF: CAIRO 822

Classified By: Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs Catherine Hill-Herndon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Key Points:

-- Egyptian MFA Cabinet Advisor for African Affairs told us on May 4 that the visit of S/E for Sudan, General J. Scott Gration, was a very good opportunity for Government of Egypt (GOE) and the USG to exchange views on Sudan (reftel).

-- Abu Zeid agreed with S/E Gration's call for an interim ceasefire could be a tactic used to address humanitarian needs, but did not feel that it would succeed due to the lack of a comprehensive political strategy.

-- Egypt does not believe that the Doha process will lead to a resolution on Darfur and feels efforts to woo JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim to the table are counterproductive.

-- Egypt sent a request to Sir Derek Plumbly, the Chairman of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee (AEC) for the CPA, to join the committee because the GOE is committed to CPA implementation, and it is the only Arab state to have a Embassy in Khartoum and a consulate in Juba.

-- The Government of Sudan (GOS) would cooperate with USG if it offered a comprehensive solution including a resolution to the ICC. Egypt feels that an international conference could provide a framework that would compel the GOS to cooperate.

¶2. (C) Comment: The GOE's lack of trust in the Doha process and the efforts to bring JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim to the negotiation table is partly driven by its current antipathy for Qatar, but Egypt's view is also shared by nearly all Darfuri leaders in Cairo. Egypt has a deep conviction in its proposal for an international conference and has advocated for this idea many times. However, it is reticent to take the lead because it does not want to be embarrassed if the conference fails to produce the desired results. The U.K. Embassy in Cairo told us on May 10 that AEC Chairman Sir Derek Plumbly visited Cairo met with Aboul Gheit on the morning of May 10. We assume that FM Aboul Gheit and Plumbly discussed Egypt's request to participate in the AEC for the CPA. End Comment.

Darfur: Looking for A Strategy, Not Tactics

¶3. (C) Abu Zeid agreed that S/E Gration's call for an interim ceasefire would help to address the humanitarian situation in Darfur, but he is skeptical that an interim ceasefire would succeed without a comprehensive political framework to hold the signatories to their commitments (reftel). He reiterated that Egypt is worried about the USG's strategy to support the

Doha talks. Abu Zeid said the Qatari leadership is pushing hard to make progress on any front even if it is only a recommitment to a previous agreement, as with the Sudan-Chad ceasefire. He said that Egypt believes that progress should not come at the expense of strategy, and he opined that there is a need for something "more sustainable and strategic." Abu Zeid said that pushing JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim was a "tactical move" to convince lobby groups in the U.S. that progress was being made, but there was "a lack of strategic thinking" of how to deliver a comprehensive agreement. He stated that insisting on Ibrahim's presence at the negotiations also sends the wrong message to the other rebel groups.

Looking to Become More Involved in CPA Implementation

¶4. (C) Abu Zeid told us that the GOE asked Sir Derek Plumbly, the Chairman of the AEC for the CPA, to join the committee because Egypt is committed to CPA implementation. He said that Egypt is the only Arab state with an Embassy in Khartoum and a consulate in Juba, and as such needed to be on the committee. Abu Zeid stated that the Arab League (AL)Qs currently on the committee, but did not attend the meetings. Abu Zeid expressed concern that the biggest threat to the CPA is the upcoming International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision on the Abyei borders because no matter what the outcome, one party will not accept it. (Note: There is some confusion as to when the ICJ decision will be announced. According to the U.N., a decision on the Abyei borders is expected by the end of June. However, the Government of South Sudan says the

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decision is not expected until the end of July. Qd Note.) He said that the GOE is concerned that the decision will spark a renewed Misseriya-Dinka conflict.

Sudanese Cooperation Possible, Egypt Pushing Conference

¶5. (C) Abu Zeid said the Government of Sudan (GOS) is ready to work with the USG "if it can see a light at the end of the ICC tunnel." However, he stated that the U.S. was currently not offering a comprehensive solution that would include a resolution to the ICC. Abu Zeid said that Egypt's proposed international conference could provide a comprehensive approach that would compel the GOS to cooperate and not "play games."

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